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Come Near to Me.

The way is long! Come near to me;
I can not live else from Thee.
Nor journey to my home above,
Unless Thou and me with Thy love.

So many errors clog my soul—
So many evils round me roll;
I faint with all the weary strife—
Come near me, Lord, for Thou art life.

The thorns seem thicker than the bloom
Ending the pathway to the tomb;
They pierce—and whither shall I flee,
Except, dear Lord, I flee to Thee!

Come near at morning, noon, and night;
Be Thy sweet presence my delight;
Thy gracious comfort freely give,
That I may look to Thee and live!

Found in the Snow.

"Hillo! This won't do. Move on."

The speaker was a gigantic policeman. The object of his wrath was a boy, who sat on a low stoop, with his face buried in his hands as if crying.

It was night, and snowing fast. A bitter, bitter night, in which one would not wish even one's enemy to be homeless and shelterless.

The boy did not stir.

"Hillo, I say," cried the policeman, angrily advancing nearer. "No shaming, youg'un. Get up and move on."

But as the lad, even yet, did not rise, the policeman stooped down, and shook him. As he did this, the boy fell over, senseless, in the snow.

"Great God!" cried the policeman. "He's dead. Frozen to death, too; perhaps starved. Poor little fellow! An orphan, no doubt. Well, I must take him to the station, I suppose."

But as he lifted the body, which he did tenderly, for he had children of his own at home, the seemingly inanimated form stirred.

"Fainted," said the officer, "but not dead yet. If the station-house only wasn't so far off. Ah! maybe they'll take him in here."

As he spoke, a close carriage had dashed up to the next house, a footman sprang from the box, the coach-door was flung open, and an old man, wrapped in a fur cloak, stepped out, and took the servant's arm, to be helped up the high stoop. Seeing the policeman, however, with the boy in his arms, he stopped abruptly.

"What! What!" he cried. "A young tramp. A beggar. Not dead—"

"No, not dead yet, Mr. Ascot," said the policeman, respectfully, as he recognized the speaker, well known as the wealthiest and most influential householder on his beat, "but I'm afraid will be, before I reach the station. And he doesn't seem to be a common sort of beggar boy—"

"Not the common sort, eh! Neither is he," said Mr. Ascot, as he looked at the boy's clothes. "Have him in here. Have him in here. John, ring the bell—why the deuce do you stand there gaping; don't you see the boy's dying from cold and hunger! I can walk up the steps well enough alone."

A moment more and Mr. Ascot himself led the way into a warm, spacious drawing-room.

"There's a roaring fire ready," he said. "I always have one waiting for me, when I come home from dining out. Where's the housekeeper! Didn't I tell John to bring her at once! Ah! here Mrs. Somers comes. Something to revive him, quick! Gracious heavens! if he should die after all."

"Poor little dear!" said Mrs. Somers, as she poured a restorative down his throat. "There, Jane, give me the blankets, while I wrap him up. Ah! he's coming to."

The boy opened his eyes, looked in a far-off way at Mrs. Somers, and then glanced, dreamily, about the room. Evidently his senses had not yet quite come back.

"Mother, mother," he murmured. "I can't find grandfather—and it's so cold. I am so—" His head dropped on her shoulder, and his eyes closed again. One of his hands, which, up to this moment, had been tightly shut, opened weakly, and a note fell to the floor.

Mrs. Somers did not see the note. Something in the boy's look had startled her; she gave a quick glance up at her master; then she began to tremble all over.

Mr. Ascot, who had been standing near her, full of interested anxiety, did not observe this look, for his attention had been attracted by the note, which he now stooped to pick up. Then he proceeded to take out his glasses, in order to read the superscription.

"Perhaps this may throw some light on the matter," he said. "The poor lad has been sent out on an errand, and has fainted from cold, and perhaps hunger. What! What! Good God!" his hands were shaking like a leaf in an autumn wind. In the deep stillness the paper rattled with a startling noise. "It can't be—it can't be! Mrs. Somers, your eyes are younger than mine—read, read—is that address—is it—mine—Thornton Ascot?"

As he spoke, in choked, convulsive gasps, Mrs. Somers leaned forward to read. The motion roused the boy again, and he opened his eyes; this time with more of consciousness in them; and he fixed a long, questioning, puzzled look on Mr. Ascot.

"Merciful heaven!" the latter said, staggering like one struck with sudden palsy, "it is her eyes—her eyes—"

With these words, he fell back senseless, the half-open letter fluttering from his fingers to the floor. Fortunately the policeman was in time to catch him, and lay him on the sofa.

For a moment the boy was forgotten, every one pressing around the master of the house.

"Is it a stroke!" asked the policeman, anxiously. "What does it mean!"

At any other time, Mrs. Somers would have been reticent about family affairs, but she was too flurried to think clearly. Surprised out of herself, she took her audience, unconsciously, into her confidence.

"No, it's not a stroke," she answered, with the experience of long years of nursing.

"His face isn't awry, you see; and he's only limp, not paralyzed. There, I've opened his cravat, and now, Jane, bring some water. It's but a fainting fit; he often has 'em when he's worried; often, I mean, since his daughter went away. She ran off, you know, most ten years ago. He's never forgiven her. Or rather she's never, leastways of late years, asked to be forgiven. The last time was when she came herself, just after she was married." All this time Mrs. Somers was busy trying to revive her master, chafing his hands, holding smelling-salts to him, even ordering the window opened, on a night as bad as this. "He turned her from his doors, in a perfect rage. I never seen him so angry afore or since. But he's been sorry for it, many and many a time, I know. I've heard him sigh so! He was thinking of her. He'd have forgiven all, years ago, if she would only have come again. But she was as proud as him. I don't know which was the prouder. She went to forrin parts with her husband—he'd been her music teacher, you see; that's what made Mr. Ascot so angry; and she has not been heard of for these years and years. There—he's coming to; what a sigh! Stand aside, Mr. Policeman, please, and give him some air. Poor man! But he's nobody to blame but himself, after all. I don't uphold disobedience in children, of course; but a deared, sweeter girl than his daughter, Margaret was her name, never was. Many and many's the time I've carried her in my arms, when she was a baby, and her mother was alive. How are you feeling now, sir!"

This last sentence was addressed to her master, who, with a deep-drawn sigh, opened his eyes.

"What, what is the matter!" he said, looking vacantly from one to the other. "Yes! I remember." Putting his hand to his brow. "Margaret—"

His eye, wandering about, fell on the boy, who, during this episode, had entirely recovered consciousness, and was now looking up, and with a strange sort of wonder, at Mr. Ascot.

"Please, sir," said the lad, seeing he had attracted the old man's eye, "can you tell me where Mr. Ascot lives! I was to go to him—only I lost my way—mother's very sick—and she's had nothing to eat to-day—"

With these words he broke down, with a great sob, the tears streaming along his thin, wan cheeks.

"Where's the note—the note!"

"Order the carriage," said Mr. Ascot, incoherently, rising to his feet. "Is it from Margaret! Did somebody say she was starving!" His poor weak, shaking hands vainly tried again to unfold the paper, which the policeman handed to him. "I—I am not as strong as I used to be. I think I am getting old," and he looked piteously at Mrs. Somers, and sank again on the sofa.

"Drink this, sir," said the housekeeper, handing him a restorative.

He drank it and rallied. "Ah! it is her—her hand writing," speaking to himself. "She is a widow. Her only child is named after—after me—"

He stopped reading, and turned to look at the boy.

"Are you grandfather!" said the latter, timidly. "I think you must be, for my mother has a picture she looks at, and cries over, and it's like you."

The letter fell again to the floor. But this time it was because he opened his arms, and the boy, catching his meaning, came to him.

"You won't let her die, will you!" said the boy, looking piteously into his face.

"Die, die!" cried the old man, rising up; and his voice and air were that of youth. "She shall not die. Where is the carriage! I will go at once. She shall come home to-night. The carriage, I say," he cried, almost angrily, and he turned toward the door, where the footman now appeared.

"The carriage waits, sir," said the servant, obsequiously.

"Get your cloak and bonnet, Mrs. Somers. A few blankets—a bit of food—not a minute to lose. Good God! Margaret dying, and we wasting our time here. No, my brave little fellow," he said, "your mother shall not die."

In a few minutes, during which the thoughtful housekeeper had provided a biscuit and some tea for the boy, and the little party set forth. While the carriage is rolling over the snow, its destination being one of the most distant and obscure streets of the great metropolis, let us say a few words about the daughter.

Margaret Ascot had been one of those sweet tempered, sympathetic natures, that everybody loved. Beautiful, accomplished, wealthy, and well-born, she had crowds of suitors; but at nineteen she turned from them all, and gave her heart to a penniless lover. This was not because she was foolishly romantic, like so many others; but because her suitor was worthy of her in every way, except in riches. He was only a poor music teacher, an Italian exile, for this was in the days, now, fortunately, long ago, before Italy was free, and when to be an Italian patriot meant banishment, or life-long imprisonment, or even death. Andrea Fillippo had, when hardly more than a boy, joined in the insurrection of '48, and had been compelled, after its failure, to fly the country. He had come to America, and being penniless, had been compelled to take up the first pursuit that offered itself. In his own land, nearly everybody had some knowledge of music; but Andrea was an amateur of more than ordinary merit; and he naturally became a teacher of singing. Margaret Ascot was his favorite pupil. He saw in her everything that youthful manhood, in its highest type, admires; she saw in him a hero and a martyr. Compared with the prosaic young men of business, or the cold, calculating lawyers, or the idle men of fashion, who constituted the bulk of her admirers, he was a prince in disguise, a young god! Parents do not sufficiently make allowances for the imaginative element in their daughters. They fancy, that, at nineteen, girls can feel as their mothers do at forty; that the dry husks of a-matter-of-fact life is sufficient for them. It is not so, and Mr. Ascot, though a sensible man in other respects, could not understand why his daughter was cold to her wealthy lovers, and had given her heart to the exile.

When Margaret, hopeless of altering his opinion, finally eloped with her lover, his wrath knew no bounds. He refused to answer her letter announcing the marriage, and when, a few weeks later, she came in person, he had her literally thrust from the door.

After vainly trying to get some other employment, for Mr. Ascot's influence deprived Andrea of all his pupils, the young couple went abroad. For a while they lived in London, but after a short time Andrea returned to Italy, and there struggled on until he died. He left his widow penniless. She had only money enough to pay her passage to America, whither she had resolved to come, in hopes, by a last appeal, to soften her father's heart. It was a winter voyage, and Margaret caught a violent cold, which threatened an inflamation of the lungs. She could only crawl feebly to the nearest lodging, no the night she landed, a miserable attic. The next day she wrote a note to her father, trusting her boy to deliver it, as she was too ill to go herself. Knowing that Mr. Ascot would be out during the day, she had deferred sending the lad until toward nightfall; but hardly had he left, before she began to think of the perils he ran, alone in that great city. Perhaps, she said to herself, he had fallen down some open area. Perhaps he had sank, chilled and insensible, in some bank of snow. When eight o'clock struck, from a neighboring steeple, and still her boy did not return, she became almost wild with fright. Ten o'clock came, but still no son. She listened intensely for the sound of his feet. But she heard nothing but the roar of the storm. At last her anxiety and fear rose to frenzy. She was sure now her boy was dead. Eleven o'clock struck. Her candle had burned down into the socket, and was almost on the point of expiring. Suddenly the sound of carriage-wheels, muffled by the snow, was heard. The carriage stopped. Surely that was the opening of the street door; there were steps ascending the stairs; yes, she could not be mistaken, they were the steps of her boy. The door of her room flew open, and her son rushed in.

"Mother, mother," he cried, flinging his arms eagerly around her, "I came as soon as I could. And, oh! mother, I have brought grandfather. See."

She looked past her son, scarcely believing her eyes. There, just behind her boy, stood her father. She rose up in bed; she held out her arms.

"Father!" she sobbed.

"Margaret! My child!" And then they were locked in each other's arms, and both were in tears.

"I can die in peace, now," she murmured, after a while, as she clung to her father's breast, "since you have forgiven me. You will promise to take care of Thornton!"

"Die," cried the father, rising bolt upright, and fairly lifting her from the bed, all the strength of his youth coming back in that supreme moment. "You shall not die. You are coming home with us. We have brought blankets, food, everything; the risk is not so great as remaining another night here; physicians, the best, shall be called in. No! you shall not die. You have not come home to die."

Nor did she die. Our simple tale has already been too long in the telling, or we might narrate how the sense of rest and peace that grew up in her now, the skillful care of the best physicians, and the knowledge of her boy's future was assured, all combined to work a cure, that, otherwise, might have been regarded as almost miraculous.

To-day there is no more beautiful women of her years, in that great city, that Margaret. She lives only for her father and her boy; they come, at least, before everything else. But she does not exclude hereself entirely from society. To the select and cultivated circle of which she is the center and chief ornament, she gives freely of her varied accomplishments and her exquisite charm of manner.

But the memory of her dead husband is still green in her heart, and ever will be; and though men of high station and even world-wide celebrity would woo her, if she would, to be the light of their home, they know, one and all, that her first and last love lies buried, in that lonely grave, on the blue shores of the Riviera, to which, every year or two, she makes a pilgrimage.

Select and Original.

The Port Huron Journal man is a real modest young man and he ought to receive a missionary appointment. This is the way he speaks of cockroach:

How doth the little rooster roach
Around the sanctum roam;
He eats our paste and drinks our ink,
And makes himself at home.
But editors should not resent
The pretty creature's whim;
Their able pens were never meant
To put a head on him.

Will blue glass give a man the blues, or will it, on the homœpathic system of like cure like, disperse them.

The Hornellsville Times winds up a legal as follows: "Bated January 1. 1872." Who has it tryed to catch during the last five years!

A Sugar Conference has been held in Paris. If you don't like it you can lump it.—Boston Globe. It must have been a sweet gathering and attracted many flies.

Don't neglect your penmanship. A man in New York got $64,000 from a banker for being a good writer. It is not yet known how many years he will get.—Danbury News.

One of our cotemporaries heads an article, "Who Shall Lead!" A very brief examination of Hoyle will show that the man next the dealer should do so.—Bridgeport Standard.

"Jackson," yelled a brakeman on the Jackson train as it came to a stop at that place. "Fifteen years for refreshments," said a gentleman who had a pair of steel bracelets on his wrists.

The Free Press thinks "a man's dearest object should be his wife, but, alas! sometimes it is his wife's wardrobe." We move as an amendment that always be substituted for sometimes. Carried.

"Will you be out long!" asked a lady of her husband as he was preparing to go out. "About the same as usual, my dear, five feet nine," said the husband, and then he stepped to one side to let a cup full of hot tea pass through the window.

Springfield, Ill., has a female dentist. She is said to be a lady of gentle extraction.—New York Commercial Advertiser. Such a woman is bound to pull through life—peacefully if she can, forceply if she must.—Norristown Hearld. Is she given to pull-backs!

A book agent, who has retired from active labor upon the hard-earned accumulations of a life of industrious cheek, says that the great secret of his success was that when he went to a house where the female head of the family presented herself, he always opened by saying: "I beg your pardon, miss, but it was your mother I wished to see. That always used to get 'em. They not only subscribed for my books themselves, but told me where I could find more customers."—Free Press.